

TROOP I

The year was 1949, and through the hard work and diligent efforts of Senator Emory W. Allison of Rolla, the Missouri State Highway Patrol was about to undergo a significant organizational restructure. According to *The Rolla Daily Herald*, Senator Allison had been working for a new troop headquarters to be located in Rolla for four years. However, the bid for the new headquarters, projected at \$37,500, was well below the \$80,000 allotted by the Missouri Legislature, which prompted Senator Emory to aspire for a Patrol training facility to also be constructed in Rolla. The new troop was to be constructed on a 13-acre tract of land purchased from the Missouri School of Mines and would face the newly constructed Missouri Highway 66. In November 1949, Highway Patrol Colonel David E. Harrison announced the new troop would consist of 15 uniformed officers and four radio operators, and would cover the counties of Crawford, Dent, Phelps, Maries, Pulaski, Laclede, and Camden. At that time, only four troopers--Sgt. C.W. Huston and Troopers Ray Hoevelman, F. A. Findley, and David L. Walker--were assigned to that area. Col. Harrison hoped the formation of the new troop would enable the department to more efficiently enforce traffic regulations on the heavily traveled Highway 66.

The local paper included several articles that followed the construction of the new office and specifically detailed the spectacle created in the community as the new radio tower was raised. Apparently, it was quite a sight as citizens closely watched the tower being painted and the awe-inspiring view of its lights at night.

The first trooper to be assigned to Troop I from the Academy was Robert E. Burgess, who received his training at the Missouri State Fairgrounds in Sedalia in 1949. Troop I's first troop commander was Thomas E. Whitecotton, and the first Lieutenant was C.W. Huston. Troopers T.W. Pasley and J.D. Chorn were also re-assigned from other stations and both were promoted to the rank of sergeant. When the new troop officially opened on January 1, 1950, there were eight troopers and four radio operators, along with stenographer Isabell Brookshire and maintenance man John Underwood. According to *The Rolla Herald* the office opened "with only a chair, desk, and telephone" inside the facility.

A mere six weeks after its creation, Captain Whitecotton remarked during a presentation to the Rolla High Twelve Club, that Troop I officers had issued 603 warnings and made 28 arrests. During that short period of time, troopers had also recovered six stolen vehicles, rendered 1,785 services, recovered \$6,000 in stolen property and investigated 61 accidents.

During the 1950s, the headlines of *The Rolla Herald* frequently included many articles that documented the Highway Patrol's role in combating crime. The following are the accounts of a just few of these many stories.

A particularly interesting story documented in the March 3, 1950, edition of *The Rolla Herald* began by stating, "Life is never dull for the Highway Patrol here, especially when it involves such duties as chasing a stolen airplane in a game of hide-in-seek in the skies above the Rolla area". Apparently, a stolen airplane from Amarillo, Texas, was spotted at the Springfield Airport and the Patrol was notified. Believing it would land at Rolla, troopers waited at the airport, only to find the airplane had actually set-down at Waynesville. The pilot of the stolen craft apparently overheard radio traffic that the Patrol was hot after his trail and immediately took off. It was then a trooper went up in a private airplane and assisted as the pilot chased the stolen plane in and out of the clouds in an aerial game of cat-and-mouse. The chase reportedly continued until the stolen airplane finally lost the trooper and the helpful pilot, identified as Jim Campbell, near Sullivan. On March 6, 1950, Illinois State Police apprehended the plane's pilot. Retired Troop I Lt. Ray Hoevelmann said he wasn't sure who the trooper was in this case, but suspected it was Sgt. Huston.

In 1950, the Rolla newspaper also told of another unique investigation, at least by today's standards, when a youth was arrested for stealing from a farmer. Apparently, a 17-year-old boy, who had been working for an Edgar Springs farmer, quit and then began to make numerous purchases, including a car. Being suspicious, the farmer decided to check the various locations on his farm where he had buried money and found that \$2,300 was indeed missing. The youth admitted to troopers he had stolen \$500, but was ultimately charged with stealing \$1,800.

That same year, then Tpr. Hoevelmann shot one of two juveniles in the leg as the suspects attempted to flee from officers following a pursuit in which the juvenile's car struck the trooper's vehicle. When interviewed on the matter some 56 years later, retired Lt. Hoevelmann said he had no intention of seriously hurting the youth.

In May 1950, Captain Whitecotton stated troopers would start issuing more tickets and fewer warnings in response to the higher number of accidents occurring in the area. At that time, the ratio was about 10 warnings for every ticket.

In August 1950, the Korean Conflict was heating up and a decision was made to re-activate Ft. Leonard Wood. In reaction to that, Troop I transferred Tpr. G.R. (Dick) Knight from Camden County to Pulaski County. The position of safety officer was created and filled by Trooper Joe Brummell, who transferred from Lebanon to Rolla to fill the new slot. It should be noted that some time during his career, an individual he was trying to arrest shot Tpr. Brummell in the arm and chest. The suspect then committed suicide three days later with the officer's revolver. Trooper Bob Burgess, who held the distinction of being Troop I's first recruit, was activated into the air corps, as America was attempting to increase its forces to prepare for the ongoing overseas conflict.

Troopers assigned to Troop I during its early years were involved in investigations of every nature. In addition to those investigations the troopers

recovered a large number of stolen vehicles. For example, documented in a June 1950 edition of *The Rolla Herald* was a story of three Pennsylvania youths, who also were wanted for crimes in their home state, who were apprehended in a stolen car by troopers in Crawford County. The next day an article in the same newspaper stated, "Some Pennsylvania citizens are making a habit of getting picked up in Missouri while driving stolen vehicles", when troopers near Cuba once again nabbed a car thief who was also an escapee from the keystone state. Within that same short time span, troopers near Lebanon apprehended three Indiana youths in a stolen vehicle. The success of the troopers was best summarized in the August Progress edition of *The Rolla Herald* when Captain Whitecotton stated that in the last 12 months Troop I officers had seized more than 80 stolen vehicles.

On April 4, 1951, tragedy struck the Laclede County community of Conway, when a local citizen, identified as Kenneth Essary, shot and killed four family members at their home. When arrested by troopers he confessed to the crimes, but was suspected of likely being mentally ill.

With the re-activation of Ft. Wood, traffic accidents and fatalities rose sharply. For example, on April 19, 1951, three teenaged girls and a soldier were killed when the soldier attempted to pass a vehicle and collided head-on with a tractor-trailer. In response to the growing traffic problem, Troop I Sergeant Claude Arnold and Tpr. Dick Knight, along with General Sturgis of Ft. Leonard Wood, testified before the Missouri Legislature. They requested vast improvements be made to Highway 66, then referred to as "Deathtrap 66", in an effort to lower the rising number of serious accidents.

November 1952: Because of the rise of crime in Phelps County, area residents formed a group to combat the increasing lawlessness. Also, a grand jury was convened to investigate the community's growing concern about crime. The report that followed was very critical of law enforcement, but was complimentary to the Patrol and its efforts. It stated, "Phelps County has been without protection from criminal activity for a considerable period of time, except for the good services of the State Highway Patrol". The report also criticized the Patrols lack of search and seizure authority and urged all citizens to support legislation to correct the deficiency. According to retired Highway Patrol Sergeant J.B. King, his research of the Patrol and its role in law enforcement in Pulaski County yielded similar sentiments.

On February 9, 1953, Troop I had its first change in command when Earl L. Davis took over the helm from Captain Whitecotton. The 1950s saw four other officers hold the position of Troop I commanding officer, following Captain Davis' tenure, which ended on February 28, 1954. In 1954, John Tandy transferred from Troop G, Willow Springs, and took over as the commander at the Rolla office. However, citing an inability to find a home for his family, on April 30, 1954, Captain Tandy returned to Troop G as their commanding officer. That move resulted in Lewis D. Howard being promoted to the troop commander's position on May 1, 1954. Captain Howard was one of the original members of the

Patrol and a native of the small Pulaski County town of Dixon. At that time, Troop I's manpower consisted of 22 uniformed officers and four radio operators. Theodore R. Taylor followed as Troop I commander, when he succeeded Captain Howard on October 1, 1957. Captain Taylor served as captain until March 1, 1959, when Paul E. Corl was named as commander. Captain Corl held the top position until September 30, 1961.

Using deadly force to apprehend or stop someone who was in the process of committing a felony was common during the 1950s. For example, on April 26, 1955, Tpr. Jim Hudson shot and seriously injured the driver of a stolen vehicle, who was also an AWOL soldier, following a long pursuit that covered both Pulaski and Laclede counties. Apparently, the soldier had stolen vehicles on two previous occasions. That same day Tprs. Donald Arnold and Bob Burgess stopped a vehicle south of Newburg on Rt. T, after the four occupants had robbed liquor store in Edgar Springs. When stopped, two of the occupants exited the vehicle upon request, however, it took a shotgun blast from the troopers to cause a third suspect to exit. Apparently, the fourth suspect was dead as the result of being shot by the storeowners during the robbery. An interesting note to this story was that the hold-up crew consisted of a female who was the mother of 14 children.

In another incident, during the 1954 Prison Riots, Troop I Sergeant Claude Arnold fatally wounded an inmate as he was preparing to throw a typewriter from an overhead catwalk onto a crowd of unsuspecting troopers.

In January of that year, Sgt. Claude Arnold was patrolling Highway 66, east of Lebanon, when he attempted to stop a vehicle for a routine check. The driver, a Robert Loethen of Iberia, refused to comply and a pursuit ensued. Sgt. Arnold fired four shots at the suspect in his vehicle, but his efforts were unsuccessful in convincing Loethen to stop. As the chase continued, Loethen turned north onto Missouri 133 at Laclede-Pulaski County line, where he then pulled over and took cover in a ditch. From that position, Loethen used his .22-caliber rifle to fire at the trooper when the officer pulled up and stopped beside the suspect's car. Sgt. Arnold was wounded in the foot by the gunfire, but not seriously injured. Loethen next continued north and later struck a patrol car occupied by Sgt. Brummel and Tpr. Dick Knight. Sgt. Brummel responded by firing a round from his shotgun, which apparently struck Loethen in the face, but resulted in no serious injuries. Troopers between Iberia and Tuscumbia finally managed to get Loethen to stop. It was later learned that the suspect was a former mental patient.

In 1955, Troop I changed boundaries when Camden County was returned to the control of Troop F.

On August 31, 1956, Governor Donnelly signed an executive order requesting guardsman assist state troopers in patrolling the highways during the upcoming holiday period. The Troop I commander decided that the military personnel could best be used by watching the most dangerous intersections along Route 66.

On September 19, 1956, another Troop I officer was shot when Trooper Norman E. Tinnen stopped an individual for questioning between Lebanon and Waynesville on U.S. 66. Tpr. Tinnen reportedly asked the driver, identified as Roland Westberg of Chicago, for his driver's license and the suspect responded by pulling out a .38-caliber pistol. Tpr. Tinnen attempted to grab the gun, but Westberg managed to fire a round that struck the officer. Later, the investigation revealed Westberg was apparently not content with shooting Tpr. Tinnen just once, as he next stood over the fallen officer and fired three more rounds, striking the officer with two. Westberg then attempted to flee from the scene in his stolen vehicle, but went only a short distance before he ran the car into a ditch. The suspect was later spotted by the Patrol airplane and captured about 12 miles southeast of Lebanon. Westberg reportedly quickly gave up after troopers in the plane fired several rounds in his direction. It was later learned that just 24 hours before his encounter with Tpr. Tinnen, Westberg had murdered his 11-year-old cousin in Chicago. In November of that year Westberg was found guilty and sentenced to 25 years in prison. However, after several escape attempts and murdering an inmate, Westberg took his own life. Another interesting note to this story was that a hitchhiker picked up by Westberg might have saved Tpr. Tinnen's life. Apparently, the stranger loaded the injured officer back into his patrol car and took him to a nearby gas station, so that help could be summoned.

May 29, 1957: Tragedy strikes in Crawford County when eight individuals are killed when a car on Missouri Highway 19 pulls into the path of an approaching vehicle on U.S. 66 in Cuba. At that time, it was the worst accident in Troop I history.

January 22, 1957: *The Rolla Daily News* reported Sgt. Tom Pasley was one of three Missouri state troopers who were chosen to participate in President Eisenhower's inauguration parade, and that Pasley proudly rode his motorcycle in the event. Sgt. Pasley again rode his motorcycle in the 1959 VFW Parade in Los Angeles.

On October 1, 1957, U.S. 66 was re-named Interstate 44 as name changes also occurred on many other highways that were incorporated into the interstate system.

When speed limits were implemented, fatalities in Troop I dropped from 58 in 1957, to 31 in 1958.

On June 24, 1959, Trooper H.J. Delcour and his 1959 Dodge patrol car were pictured on the front page of the local newspaper after he delivered 100 gas masks from Ft. Leonard Wood to the U.S. Medical Center in Springfield in 57 minutes. Tpr. Delcour averaged over 100 mph, so the masks could be delivered to anxious officers. The arrival of the masks allowed officers to storm the facility under the cover of gas, so that control could be restored and five guards rescued who had been taken hostage by 106 mental patients.

April 21, 1960: On that evening Pulaski County deputies and Sgt. Dick Knight were watching a home north of Crocker, where they suspected a burglary

might occur. Two suspects did indeed arrive and shortly thereafter the officers heard the breaking of glass. The lawmen identified themselves and the subjects responded by running to their vehicle. However, when one of the suspects decided to return to the house he was shot and killed as he got to the porch. It was ruled that the suspect, Kenneth Ewing, was committing a felony and the officers were justified in using deadly force.

During the early 60s, Sgt. Pasley, along with Tprs. Delcour and Viesmann, successfully competed on the Highway Patrol's five-man pistol team at tournaments throughout the United States. On June 16, 1961, Tpr. Delcour took first place at the Greater Kansas City Invitational Pistol Tournament. In July of that year, Tpr. Delcour continued by winning all the shooting honors at the Missouri Rifle and Pistol Association Championships. In 1962, the Patrol pistol team placed second at the National Pistol Matches. At that same event Tpr. Delcour once again displayed his shooting prowess became the pride of the Highway Patrol by taking first place in the National Police Division.

December 1, 1960: 130 truck drivers were arrested in a 24-hour period during a truck check conducted in front of Troop I Headquarters.

On August 24, 1961, the Patrol announced effective October 1, Troop I Commanding Officer Paul E. Corl would be reassigned to GHQ as a field supervisor and would be replaced by Captain C.R. Oliver, who previously had been serving as Troop C commander.

On June 16, 1962, Sgt. Dick Knight and Tpr. W.V. Bench arrested four individuals after they had held up a bank in Ohio and escaped with \$13,365.

On July 23, 1962, troopers investigated a particularly tragic and unusual accident when two brothers traveling on Rt. HH in Laclede County collided head-on. Evidently one brother, along with his wife and their small child, were leaving the family home while the other brother was returning, when the accident occurred. All four family members were killed in the crash.

October 7 1963: High speed pursuits were not uncommon, but on this date a chase that was initiated by Tpr. W.E. Aytes on U.S. 66 and reached speeds of 130 mph, made headlines not only in the local papers but also in the *Chicago Tribune*. Evidently, the individual being pursued was the 15-year-old nephew of Joseph (Pepe) Giancana, who was a reputed high figure in the Chicago Syndicate. The lengthy pursuit, which included many Troop I members, finally ended when Trooper Lawrence D. Long forced the suspect's car to stop. According to retired Troop I Radio Operator Joe Kearse, it was quite a scene when the juvenile's mother showed-up at Troop I in her luxury vehicle and accompanied by two large bodyguards.

Another unique incident during that time period occurred when Troop I Radio Operator Joe Kearse was called upon to rescue two University of Missouri-Rolla (UMR) students who had been lost in a cave north of Rolla for some 12 hours. Kearse, who was an amateur spelunker and who had explored that particular cave, stated that UMR officials were particularly fearful because of the forecast of rain and the probability of the cave flooding. In recognition of his

efforts, the Missouri Safety Council later presented Kearsse with a certificate for saving the students lives.

On July 13, 1964, the worst accident in the nation on that particular weekend occurred on Highway 17 in Pulaski County when 10 people died in a four-car pile-up. The accident occurred when a serviceman attempted to pass a vehicle on a curve and struck another vehicle head-on. Following the initial accident, two more cars piled into the first two vehicles. Three of the victims were teenagers from Crocker and six were Ft. Wood soldiers. Sgt. Dick Knight said it was the worst accident he had seen since 1941, when 18 Ft. Wood soldiers were killed in an accident near Hazelgreen, which is located approximately 15 miles east of Lebanon. It should be noted that in the 1968 edition of the *Patrol News* it classified the Hazelgreen wreck as Missouri's worst. The article stated the crash occurred when a military truck was on the wrong side of the road and collided head-on with a tractor-trailer transport truck loaded with paint, resulting in the fiery death of 13 soldiers and the driver of the tractor-trailer.

During the 1950s and 60s, multi-fatality accidents were very common. For example, on February 22, 1965, six members of two families from Fredericktown, Missouri, were killed in a head-on collision on Missouri 19, nine miles north of Salem. On April 19, 1965, eight people were killed in a traffic crash on U.S. 66, east of Waynesville, when a vehicle jumped a medial strip and struck another vehicle head-on. Evidently, local radio stations created additional difficulties following this accident when they announced the names of the deceased before next-of-kin were notified in person.

According to the 1964 Progress Edition of *The Rolla Daily News*, there were 34 officers assigned to Troop I at that time.

April 26, 1965: On that date Bobbie Reeves of Lebanon was charged with the attempted murder of Tpr. Siah Davis. The incident occurred when Reeves attempted to run over the trooper after he had stopped another vehicle for drag racing. Tpr. Davis had to dive out of the way to keep from getting hit.

The 1966 Progress Edition of *The Rolla Daily News* reported that at the cost of \$93,000 an addition would be constructed to the north side of Troop I. When completed it would double the troop's floor space to 4,300 square feet. The plans also called for the paving of the 16,000-square foot back lot. The article went on to say that as of that date, Troop I consisted of 38 uniformed officers, three driver examiners, two commercial enforcement officers, six communication engineers, and four clerical positions. By August 1968, the number of uniformed officers had reportedly risen to 46. The article also complimented the accomplishments of the troop by reporting since Captain Oliver's appointment as Troop I commander, the troop had maintained the "highest enforcement index" in the state.

On March 23, 1967, Lt. A.H. Leslie, a 30-year veteran of the patrol, replaced Captain C.R. Oliver, who retired after 35 years of service as troop commander.

In January 1969, troopers investigated an incident near the Pulaski-Texas County line where the bodies of five individuals were found in a car. Troopers concluded the driver of the car had attempted to cross a shallow-creek when his vehicle became buried in the gravel. When attempts to push the car out were unsuccessful, the occupants apparently got back into the car for warmth and later succumbed to carbon monoxide poisoning when the exhaust pipe became covered.

On July 17, 1969, a Pulaski County coroner's inquest ruled that Tpr. James R. Temmen (Troop F officer) was justified in the shooting death of James R. Brooks. Apparently, Tpr. Temmen spotted Brooks in a stolen vehicle at a Dixon gas station and fired at the suspect when he refused to halt as ordered and fled in the vehicle.

On November 1, 1969, Captain W.L. Hutchings replaced retiring Troop I commander, Captain Leslie. That same month Lt. Dick Knight died of Leukemia at age 59, while still serving as lieutenant.

On February 23, 1970, Trooper Gary Snodgrass, age 24, was killed in an auto accident when he lost control of his 1969 Plymouth patrol car on Missouri Highway 72, approximately 7 1/2 miles east of Salem (just west of old Meramec River Bridge). Tpr. Snodgrass's vehicle reportedly traveled off the right side of the road and struck an embankment. The young trooper, who was survived by his wife, Ellen, and three-year-old son, Anthony Wayne, had just graduated from the Academy on September 8, 1969.

The October 4, 1972, edition of the Waynesville-St. Robert, *Daily-Guide*, stated that over 600 concerned citizens attended a meeting, which was addressed by Missouri Attorney General John C. Danforth. The gathering was in response to the Highway Patrol and Attorney General's Office raiding several establishments in the area known to promote prostitution. According to the *Daily-Guide*, "Thirty-seven individuals were arrested at three night-spots where prostitutes operated freely". In 1970, similar arrests were made in the Ft. Leonard Wood area.

On December 1, 1972, Lt. Harold M. Schmitt took over the position of Troop I commanding officer. He held that position until August 1, 1975, when Troop C Lt. Allen S. Whitmer was promoted to captain and took over the commander's position in Rolla. On February 24, 1981, Captain Whitmer was appointed to the position of superintendent of the Highway Patrol and Troop I's Lt. Howard J. Delcour was then chosen to lead the troop into the 80s. Captain Delcour held that position until his retirement on January 1, 1989, when Troop E Lieutenant Gary E. Whitener was appointed as Troop I commander.

According to retired Troop I Sgt. B.J. Matthews, some time during 1978 the last stretch of U.S. 66 within Troop I, which was located east of Waynesville in Pulaski County, was officially bypassed by I-44 and put out-of-use as a major thoroughfare.

In 1980, now retired Sgt. P.J. Mertens was heavily involved in the surveillance of several car thieves in the Rolla area. Apparently, one of the

suspects learned of his undercover work and retaliated by hiring an individual to place a bomb on Sgt. Merten's patrol car. Fortunately, Sgt. Merten's struck a pothole as he was leaving his residence, which dislodged the device and made it inoperable. An investigation resulted in three individuals being convicted on charges relating to the bomb and auto theft.

On July 6, 1981, Sergeant B.J. Matthews was returning from Jefferson City with a new, unmarked, 1981 Mercury Marquis patrol car. After crossing the Maries-Phelps County line on U.S. Highway 63, he saw an individual urinating alongside the road. Sgt. Matthews confronted the person, later identified as Robert E. Robinson, and after a short discussion asked him for some identification. Robinson responded by pulling a .380 semi-automatic pistol from a small pouch and firing one round, at almost point-blank range, at the trooper. Sgt. Matthews, who was a large and powerful individual, managed to grab the weapon which caused the bullet to strike his torso off-center and barely miss what would have likely been a fatal wound to his left kidney. Then, even though wounded, Sgt. Matthews wrestled the suspect to the ground and managed to keep a grip on the gun in Robinson's hand, while he also kept Robinson from grabbing his service revolver. As the struggle continued a passing motorist, identified as James Coats of Mountain Grove, Missouri, stopped to aid the trooper by grabbing Robinson's pistol. Robinson, who was also wanted in the state of Louisiana for homicide, was later sentenced to life plus five years for the assault of Sgt. Matthews.

Less than one year later, on May 1 1982, a Troop I officer and a deputy responded to a domestic disturbance south of Rolla. A despondent intoxicated soldier, armed with a sword and a filet knife, was reportedly threatening his young children. When the officers arrived they learned the armed suspect, identified as Donald L. Spanton, had left his home and went into a wooded area behind the house. Preparations were being made for the children to leave and the officers were continuing their search when the armed and intoxicated suspect returned home. Other officers soon arrived and lengthy negotiations proved unsuccessful in convincing Spanton to disarm. The presence of a large number of individuals at a saddle club, located just a few hundred feet from Spanton's home, necessitated his capture and safe removal. As the evening carried on, Tpr. Matthews, who had just arrived, initiated a conversation with Spanton. Despite all hopes of an uneventful end, Spanton suddenly raised his sword and stepped toward Tpr. Matthews in a striking position, forcing the trooper to fire his shotgun for his own protection. The investigation showed that Spanton was but a few feet away from the trooper when he fell to the ground.

On November 15, 1984, Trooper Eric Wilhoit was shot in the arm with a .22-caliber rifle as he and sheriff's deputies were attempting to apprehend a Steelville resident identified as Andrew R. Arney. A standoff developed when officers attempted to arrest Arney for a weapons violation. After Arney's initial volley of fire, which resulted in the wounding of the trooper, officers returned fire

and serious wounded the suspect. Fortunately Tpr. Wilhoit's injury was not serious and he was treated and released from a local hospital.

In 1986, Troop I Lieutenant Jack Waters passed away from cancer while still serving as an active member of the Troop I's staff.

The year 1987 saw extensive re-modeling and a much-needed addition to Troop I Headquarters. The construction phase meant numerous hardships on office personnel, especially the communications division, which temporarily had to move their operations to the building's basement. The employees of Troop I worked through the inconveniences and the end-result was more office space and an indoor range. In particular, the renovation did much to improve the radio division's work area and resulted in greater security for those employees. The old complex was constructed in such a manner that the radio operators were facing away from the front door, which was never locked. The entrance also was constructed so those inside could not see who was approaching until after they entered. This put the unarmed midnight shift radio operator in a vulnerable position as that person was typically alone in the office. The Troop I upgrade also included an addition to the north side of the garage. Further improvements to Troop I came in 1997, when the radio room was again modernized and elevators were added to meet ADA requirements.

That same year also saw one of Missouri's most famous manhunts take place in the Troop I area. The event began rather innocuously on a Sunday night in March when Rolla police officers attempted to contact a subject at a local hotel after they determined he possessed a stolen vehicle. The evening soon turned chaotic when the suspect, identified as John David Brown, fired a shot at one of the approaching officers and then fled on foot. Over the next couple of weeks a manhunt escalated to a monstrous scale as law enforcement officers and guardsmen from throughout the state arrived to assist. As officers frantically searched using every known resource, including a special FBI search plane, Brown struck again when he fatally shot an elderly gentleman as he was opening a church for Wednesday night services (near the small town of Doolittle). On April 20, the manhunt ended as leads dried up and homes were no longer being mysteriously broke into. The saga of John David Brown re-surfaced just a few weeks later when on May 9 he was reportedly sighted at a restaurant located near Buckhorn in Pulaski County. Corporal R.E. Roark responded and pursued Brown as the suspect fled away in his vehicle. Unfortunately, Brown again eluded officers when he abandoned his vehicle and took off on foot into a wooded area along Highway 17, near Laquey. During the manhunt, which lasted approximately three weeks, officers located Brown's camp in the woods near Laquey, but never located the murder suspect. However, Brown did not escape justice as he was later apprehended in Oklahoma and ultimately found guilty of murder, for which he received a life sentence.

In 1988 Corporal Mike Cooper was one of nine individuals who received an honorable mention from the International Chiefs of Police/Parade Magazine Police Service Award program, when he saved an individual's life following a

pursuit in Laclede County. Cpl. Cooper displayed heroic behavior by freeing the river from a wrecked, burning vehicle, after he had pursued the suspect northbound from Lebanon on Highway 5. In the course of saving the person's life, Cpl. Cooper received burns to his hands and back. The nomination also cited Cpl. Cooper's drug interdiction and marijuana eradication efforts.

Leading Troop I into the 1990s was Captain Gary Whitener. His success resulted in him being promoted to the rank of major in October 1991, and being assigned to General Headquarters. To replace this void, Troop C Lieutenant Ronald P. Wiedemann was called upon to fill the commanding officer's position at Rolla. Joseph L. Swearingen, who had previously served as a lieutenant in Troop D, was next placed in command of Troop I following Captain Wiedemann's retirement on April 1, 1999. He, too, remained in that position until his retirement, which took place on March 1, 2002. On that date, Randy L. Becker, who had previously served as a Troop I lieutenant, was promoted to captain and named commander of Troop I.

On Sunday, April 17, 1994, Trooper Terry Wilkerson and the officer he was training, Trooper Roger Pipkin, were patrolling Missouri 8, east of Steelville, when they received information that Steelville police officers were pursuing an eastbound vehicle on the same highway and that the occupants had fired shots at those officers. A short time later, the troopers spotted the suspect vehicle on Route E at the Huzzah River, near a canoe rental. When one of the vehicle's occupants, identified as Randy Stewart, fired a round at the officers, Tpr. Wilkerson returned fire with his H&K rifle and fatally wounded the suspect. Apparently, Stewart and the other two occupants, who were apprehended, had committed various other crimes before being spotted by the Steelville officers.

On September 23, 1994, Trooper Curtis Martin responded to a minor two-car accident on U.S. Highway 63, south of Vienna. During his investigation, he located some ammunition in one of the vehicles, which had been occupied by a Mark Ebright and Anthony Denson. As he continued his investigation Maries County Sheriff Roy Bassett stopped to assist. Shortly thereafter, Denson suddenly pulled out a pistol and fatally wounded Sheriff Bassett and then began shooting at Tpr. Martin. A gunfight ensued as the two were separated by nothing more than one of the wrecked vehicles. As Tpr. Martin struggled to gain a tactical advantage during the gun battle, he was also charged and attacked by Ebright. The confrontation ended with Tpr. Martin fatally wounding Denson and also shooting and seriously wounding Ebright. The investigation later revealed the two had earlier robbed and then shot a convenience store clerk in Indiana. Ebright was later convicted of first-degree murder and received a life sentence. That year the Missouri Chapter of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Official International, awarded Troop I Radio Operators Randy Ebers and Sonny Cash their annual "Critical Incident Telecommunicator" award for their exemplary service during the shooting.

Exactly two years to the day following Tpr. Martin's incident, Tpr. McDonald Brand was forced to use deadly force when an armed motorist

confronted him. The incident began when Tpr. Brand stopped Martin L. Wells of Rolla for a traffic violation at the entrance to the eastbound rest area in Phelps County. Tpr. Brand approached Wells and as the violator stepped from his vehicle, the trooper noticed that Wells' right hand was positioned near his left side and tucked inside his open shirt. As the suspect turned toward the trooper a gun fell to the ground. Wells immediately retrieved the gun and a struggle ensued. Wells grabbed the trooper's right arm while also pointing the weapon at Tpr. Brand. Despite the close struggle, Tpr. Brand managed to draw his pistol and fatally wound the suspect.

On October 28, 2000, another Troop I Officer, Tpr. James Folsom, was forced to use deadly force to save his life. On that evening, Tpr. Folsom and other officers responded to a domestic dispute in Maries County. When they arrived the suspect, identified as Bradley Davis, began firing a rifle in their direction. Negotiations failed and Davis exited his home, where Tpr. Folsom confronted him. Davis then re-entered his home, grabbed his rifle and pointed it at Folsom. Tpr. Folsom, who later stated that proper training enabled him to save his own life in that incident, was able to shoot Davis before the suspect could shoot him.

On May 22, 2003, Trooper Michael Newton was killed in auto accident on Interstate 70 in Lafayette County, when a truck struck his patrol car while he was parked on the shoulder. Tpr. Newton was assigned to Troop A at the time, but his death was particularly tragic to those who worked at Troop I. Tpr. Newton grew up in Newburg and was the son of long-time Troop I employee, Gary Newton. If not for the tragic event, Tpr. Newton would have transferred back to his native Phelps County within a few short months. In commemoration of his service to the citizens of Missouri, the bridge crossing the Little Piney River on I-44 in Phelps County was re-named the Mike Newton Bridge.

In 2006, the Patrol broke ground and began construction on a new commercial driver's license (CDL) "supersite" on Troop I property. The project is scheduled to be completed in June 2007, and will allow both the driving and written portions of the commercial driving tests to be given at one location.

Also that year, the Missouri Department of Transportation continued its efforts to make our highways safer by replacing worn-out sections of Interstate 44. When combined, over 20 miles of interstate were replaced in Crawford, Phelps, and Laclede counties. Together, Troop I officers and MoDOT employees worked hundreds of hours of overtime within the construction zones. Meticulous planning, along with cooperation and hard work, resulted in far fewer traffic crashes than was anticipated within these areas.

In April 2006, Troop I members joined the ranks of other troopers and emergency personnel throughout the state when they responded to the aftermath of several tornadoes in the state's bootheel. On September 22, Troop I officers were again called upon when tornadoes touched down in and around the city of St. James in eastern Phelps County.

On September 23, 2006, more than 100 individuals visited Troop I to help celebrate the Patrol's 75th anniversary. Tours of troop headquarters and the various displays presented educated the public about the many responsibilities of the Highway Patrol.

The dangers of being a state trooper were no more evident than on November 30, 2006, when Sergeant George W. Arnold and Trooper Tyler D. Stewart, along with three Doolittle rural firefighters, were nearly struck by a tractor-trailer on Interstate 44 at the Jerome interchange in Phelps County. The troopers and firefighters had responded to a traffic crash as snow and ice were rapidly causing road conditions to deteriorate. While investigating that crash, an out-of-control tractor-trailer unit slid off the highway and into the center median.

Tragically, the truck struck and killed the driver involved in the first accident and then, before coming to rest on top of Trooper Stewart's patrol car, nearly struck the troopers and firefighters as they attempted to dive out of its way. The snow and ice storm continued to wreck havoc on travel conditions as it led to many more traffic crashes, several of which involved Highway Patrol vehicles. However, the winter storm may best be remembered by Troop I officers for a massive traffic jam, which occurred on I-44 in Pulaski County as road conditions caused the highway to be closed for nearly 24 hours.

The history of Troop I, from its conception in 1949 to 2006, when the Missouri State Highway Patrol will proudly celebrate 75 years of service to the public, has been full of exciting and memorable experiences. For example, in recent years numerous officers have been recognized for saving a life. In 1988, Trooper Eric Volkmer risked his life when he saved another person from drowning after the individual had fallen into a frozen pond. In 2001, Trooper Casey Jadwin received the state employee of the month award for June when he saved the life of a young child who had quit breathing. That same year Trooper Neil Poynter was recognized for saving a life. In 2005, Trooper Jason Riggs, while off-duty on a fishing trip in Canada, risked his own life to save his guide who was drowning in the chilly waters of Great Slave Lake. Tpr. Riggs was honored for his actions with the Patrol's Valor Award in May 2006. These are but just a few of the many heroic efforts by Troop I officers throughout its history.

Protecting the citizens of south-central Missouri both off and on our highways has been a way of life for all the employees of Troop I throughout its 56-year history. As its employees move forward into the future, there is little doubt the same work ethic and attitude of esprit de corps will follow, and that the citizens will continue to be served in a professional manner.